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BULU TALES.

BY GEORGE SCHWAB.¹

I. MVIN LISTENS TO THE VOICE OF FOOLISHNESS.

1 A nga bo na, môt ve kôlô, ve² ke wulu afan afan. ane a nga yene
tit é tele a wua je nga. ane tit é nga wu. tite te é mbe jôe' na,
mvin.³ eyoñe te môt a nga jô na, me tame⁴ ba tite jam. eyoñ a
nga mane tune tit ékôp, ane tite jé é nga kôlô si a ke mbi afan. ane
5 môt a nga loone tite na, a mvin, te ke, éyoñ w' aye ke afane den, ke⁵
betit b' aye jô wo na, ô ne te ékôp amu jé? ke, w' aye dañe wô'ô
ôson. ma fe éyoñ m' aye kui ja ke bôt b' aye jô me na, jé ô bili ékôp?
éyoñ m' aye kate be na, ékôp mvin, ke me ke,⁶ m' aye wô'ô ôsone ya
kate bôt foé. ajô di e ne te yian. ane mvin é nga bulan a zu bômbô
10 si. ane môt a nga mane ba tit a ke je ja. ane môte te a nga ke
kui ja dé a loone binga bé a kape be tit ése, ve émien a nji di je amu
a nga yene je angôndô. nalé môt a ne ngule ya jañ éyoñ a bo a mate
besiñe bé ve beta bulan vôm be né.

[Translation.]

(1) It did happen thus, Man left, [and]⁷ went [to] walk [in the] forest (forest). Then he did see | [an] animal (it) standing and fired (it) [his] gun. And then [the] animal (it did) died. Animal (that it was) had the name (thus) | Mvin. Then Man (he) did say thus, I first cut up [my] animal (mine). When | he had finished skinning

¹ See this Journal, 25: 106-124; 27: 266-288; 32: 428-437.

² *Ve* is an untranslatable particle when used as in narratives of this kind.

³ *Mvin* is the antelope *Cephalophus calyphygus*.

⁴ *Tame* is an auxiliary verb meaning "do first." As used here, it expresses adverbial modification.

⁵ *Ke*, as used here, has about the significance of our exclamation "hm!"

⁶ *Ke me ke* is equivalent to "hm! I too," or "hm! I also."

⁷ Words in parentheses are literal translations of words not required in reading the English translation. Words in brackets are added in order to make the sentence clearer.

[the] animal, then [the] animal (his it) did get up [from the] ground and went running [into the] forest. And so || (5) Man (he) did call [the] animal thus, O Mvin, not go, when you will go [into the] forest to-day | [the] animals (they) will say [to] you thus, You have no hide why (for)? You will (surpass to hear | shame) [be ashamed]. I too when I shall reach [my] village [the] people (they) will say [to] me thus, Why (you have) [have you this] hide? | I shall tell them thus, [It is the] hide [of] Mvin, I too, I shall (hear shame) [be ashamed] to | tell [the] people [the] news. (Matter this it) [This you must] not do. And so Mvin (it) did return and come [to] lie || (10) [on the] ground. And so Man (he) did finish cutting up [the] animal and (went) [took] it [to the] village. Then Man (that he) did go | [and] reach[ed] [his] village (his) and call[ed] [his] wives (his) and divided [among] them [all the] meat (all), but himself he not ate [of] it because | he did (see) [look upon] it [as something] horrible. Thus one (he has power) [may] (to) perish when he (does he) runs away | [from] (haters) [his enemies] (his), but again returns [to the] place [where] they are.

2. GORILLA AND CHIMPANZEE ESCAPE FROM LEOPARD.

- I A nga bo na. ze ve ke a jeñ¹ betit. ane a nga viane² yen ékañ.
 ane a nga jô na, m' aye zu kpwé ékañe jame ji akiti. ane nji ke é
 nga ke a wulu. ane nye ke a nga yene fe ve ékañe te. ane a nga jô
 5 na, m' aye zu kpwé ékañe jame ji akiti. ane wo'o ke a nga ke afan
 ve yene fe ékañe te. ane bese be nga ke tôban. ane³ ze a nga tate
 sili wo'o ba nji na, mi ate⁴ zu bo jé va? ba fe be nga sili nye na, wo
 ate zu bo jé va? ane ze a nga jô na, m' ate zu kpwé ékañe ji. wo'o
 na, ma fe m' ate zu kpwé ékañe ji. ane nji ke a nga jô na, ma fe m' ate
 10 kpwé. eyoñe te be nga jô na, za a yeme bete yôp? nji na, ma
 m'ayeme bete yôp. ane nji a nga bete yôp a tyi'i ékañ a mesôñ. a
 maneya bo nalé ve sili na, za a zu ka ékañ? wo'o na, ma. ane be
 nga sili na, za a yem fial⁶ ékañ? ze na, ma m'ayem. ane wo'o a

¹ *Jeñ* means literally "to search for," but is often used in the sense of "to hunt."

² *Viane, vane, or via'a* = an auxiliary verb, meaning "to do the unexpected *instead* of the expected," and cannot readily be translated to make good reading in English.

³ *Ane* is used to introduce sentences in narrative, much as the unlettered in our own country use the word "and" to introduce sentences: *Ane* = "and so, then, as, like, since."

⁴ *Ate* is an auxiliary verb, and is the sign of the near past; anything which has transpired during the present day or the previous night; as, "mi *ate* so éyoñe vé?" ("when did you arrive [to-day or during the previous night]?") *Nga* is an auxiliary verb, used with remote past; i.e., any action which has taken place before or previous to last night.

⁵ *Jibi* = "endure or bear," but is frequently used as auxiliary verb in the sense of "to do unwillingly."

⁶ Oil-palm nuts grow in large bunches, between "thorny" protuberances or spines, which severely lacerate the hands of the inexperienced; so the bunches of nuts are generally hacked to pieces by the natives. During the hacking-process, most of the ripe nuts fall out of their sheaths.

- 15 nga tate ke fé a jô be na, me tame ke tyi'i ôkaé. eyoñ a mbe fé a
 nga jô émien na, aka'a nsó'an m'ate yene ze a sôké'é ékañ! nge a
 sôé me nalé ye me nyini? ane a nga tup a ke fé. eyoñ be yangeya
 wo'o ôbe nté ze na, bi jaéya yange wo'o. a!¹ nji, tame ke tyi'i bia
 akaé. ane nji a nga ke fé. ane a nga wulu a nga jô émien na, aka'a
 20 mbo'ane m'ate yene ze a bo! nge a bo me nalé, ye me nyiñe? ane
 nye fe a nga tup, ve li'i ze a tele.

[Translation.]

(1) It did happen thus. Leopard did go and hunted animals. Then he did see [a] bunch | [of ripe oil-palm nuts]. And so he did say thus, I shall come [and] cut down [my] bunch (my this) to-morrow. Then Gorilla also (he) | did go and walked. And he also (he) did see also only [the] bunch (that). And so he did say | thus, I shall come [and] cut down [my] bunch (my this) to-morrow. Also Chimpanzee (also he) did go [into the] forest || (5) [and] saw also [the] bunch (that). And so [they] all (they) did go [and] met. So Leopard (he) did first | ask Chimpanzee and Gorilla thus, You did come [to] do what here? They too (they) did ask him thus, You | did come [to] do what here? So Leopard (he) did say thus, I did come [to] cut down [this] bunch (this). Chimpanzee | [said] thus, I too (I) did come [to] cut down [this] bunch (this). And so Gorilla too (he) did say thus, I too (I) did | come [to] cut down [this] bunch (this). Then all (they) did say thus, (There is only [then let us] we) [Then let us] all (we suffer) || (10) cut [it] down. Then they did say thus, Who (he) knows [how to] climb up? Gorilla thus, I | (I) know [how to] climb up. And so Gorilla (he) did climb up and cut [the] bunch with [his] teeth. He | finished do[ing] thus [and] asked thus, Who (he) comes [to] tie [in a bundle] [the] palm-nuts? Chimpanzee thus [said], I. Then they | did ask thus, Who (he) knows [how to] pick out [the] palm-nuts? Leopard [said] thus, I (I) know [how]. And so Chimpanzee (he) | did first go [to the] forest and said [to] them thus, I go [to] cut leaves [in which to wrap the palm-nuts after they have been separated from the bunch]. When he was [in the] forest he || (15) did say [to] himself thus, What a clawing I did see Leopard [when] he clawed [the] bunch! If he | claws me like that [shall] I (live) [escape]? And so he did (pierce) [run away], and went [into the] forest. When they did wait | [for] Chimpanzee [a] little while Leopard [said] thus, We are tired wait[ing] for Chimpanzee. Oh! Gorilla, go cut [for] us | leaves. So Gorilla (he) did go [into the] forest. As he (did walk) [was walking] he did say [to] himself thus, What | a doing I did see [that] Leopard (he) did! If he [should] do me thus, I shall live? And so || (20) he too (he) did run away leaving Leopard (he) standing [there].

¹ A can frequently be best translated by our "say;" as, "Say, Bill, where are you going?"

3. WHOSE HUSBAND WAS HE?

1 A nga bo na. môť ve lu'u binga betan. binga bete be mbe môé
na, ngon ôsimesan. a ôbi'i¹ zen a ôsoñ metok² a ôťôkan a ôwô-
melô. nde nnô wop a nga jô be na, dubane me bibôbolô.³ m'ye ke
mvan.⁴ ane a nga dañ ôsôé: ô mbe anen. ane a nga yen ando'o: e to
5 nwuman abui. ane a nga bete yôp a kpwé ando'o yôp. ane a nga
bo ve ko a ku si ve wu. ane a nga bo ve mane nyuñelan. eyoñ be
nga to nlam binga bé be nji yem jam nnô wop a nga bo. ane ôsi-
mesan a nga simesan nnô wop. nde a nga loen ôbi'i zen, nye a nga
yene zen nnôm a nga ke. ane be nga ke zene wôé ve yen ôsôé nnô wop
10 a nga dañ. ôsoñ metok² a nga dañe be: be kui kindi'i yat. woña
be nga kui ando'o si a yen nnôm a nto ve afufus afufus. ane be nga
loen ôťôkan, nnye ve tôkan nnôm. eyône te be nga loen ôwômelô.
nnye ve wômelô nnôm. ane be nga ke ja a vak amu be nga yen
mvaé. eyoñ nnôm a nga ye nyi nda wua bese ve suñ nye. ôsimesan
15 na, a ne éñwom amu me nga simesan nye. ôbi'i zen na, a ne éñwom
amu me nga bi zen. ôsoñ metok na, a ne éñwom amu me nga soñ
ôsôé. ôťôkan na, a ve éñwom amu me nga to'e nye. ôwômelô na,
a ne éñwom amu me nga wômelô nye. nde be nga ke be betyi'i mejô.
nye na, ke! mie bese, a ne nnô wonan bese.

[Translation.]

(1) It did happen thus. Man married (five) women. [Those] women (those, they) were (names) [named] | thus, Remembering and Finding-Path and Sounding-Fords and Picking-Things-Up and Bring-to-Life. | And so [their] husband (their he) did say [to] them thus, (Put to) soak [for] me cassava. I shall go | hunting. Then he did cross [the] river: it was large. And he did see [a] wild mango tree: it was || (5) bearing much [fruit]. And so he did climb up and threw down wild mangoes [from] above. And so he did | (do) slip (and) [he] fell down (and) died. And so he did (do) finish crumbling to pieces. As they | did remain [in] town [his] wives (his, they) [did] not know (thing) [what their] husband (their, he) did do. And so Remembering | (she) did remember [their] husband (their). So she did call Finding-Path she (she) did | (see) [find the] path [their]

¹ *Bi* = "to catch, to take," literally.

² *Soñ metok* = to sound the depth of a stream at a ford or crossing-place. The one who does this advances with a stick or pole with which the depth of water is ascertained at each step before the step is taken. *Atok* (plural *metok*) is a pond or wide place in a stream.

³ *Bibôbolô* (singular *êbôbolô*) = the long sticks of cooked cassava, the "staff of life" of West African coast, commonly called "kank" by Europeans. Before a journey is undertaken, enough of these "sticks" are cooked to last for the journey.

⁴ *Mvan* = to go hunting or fishing out in the forest by camping there for some time. Rude shelters, called *bibem*, are built out in the forest when people go *mvan*.

husband (he) did go. And so they did go [that] path there, [to] see [the] river [their] husband (their) || (10) (he) did cross. Sounding-Fords (she) did cross them: they reached [the] bank (beyond) [on the other side]. Then | they did reach wild mango tree under and saw [that their] husband (he) was very small pieces. And so they did | call Pick-Things-Up. She picked up [the pieces of her] husband. Then they did call Bring-to-Life. | She brought back to life [her] husband. And so they did go [to the] village and rejoice[d] because they (did see | good) [felt glad]. When Husband (he) was about to enter [the] hut [of] one of (them) [his wives] all quarrelled over him. Remembering || (15) [said] thus, He is mine because I did remember (that of) him. Finding-Path [said] thus, He is mine | because I did find [the] path. Sounding-Fords [said] thus, He is mine because I did sound | [the] river. Picking-Things-Up [said] thus, He is mine because I did pick [him] up (him). Bring-to-Life [said] thus, | He is mine because I did bring [him] to life (him). And so they did go to (cutters) [the settlers of] disputes. | He [said] thus, Hm! you all, he is husband yours all.

4. WHY ALL THE BIRDS HATE HAWK.

- 1 A nga bo na, ze a nga kombô yen abañ amu a nga yi wôé nye
ane a nga wulu afan ve te ke yen abañ. ane a nga yen zum a bet
élé yôp a yene fe abo abañ wôé. ane a nga sili zum na, za a ne abo
di? zumu¹ na, abo abañe le. ze na, tame² zu me ne va. ane zu-
5 mu a nga sise si. ane ze a nga nyoñe jôm be kalan ajô a jô zumu na,
kalan na, éyoñ w'aye yen abañ a bô si va te ve'ele kate nye na, ze a
zu valé, amu m'aye wôé nye. ane ze a nga kôlô. ane abañ a nga
zu a ke ôyo. ane zumu a nga yene ze a za'a ôbe ôyap a jô nye na,
wulu'u avô!³ wulu'u avô! ane abañ a nga kôlô si⁴ a ke mbil a kui
10 ôsôé. ze ve wô'ô abé ane a nga yene abañ momo. môs mfe éyoñ
abañ a nga bô ôyo wôé, zumu a nga beta yene ze a za'ak. ane a nga
jô abañe na, wulu'u avô! wulu'u avô! ze a zu bi wo. eyoñe ze a
nga kui élé ane² a nga koé abañ a tubeya.⁵ azu lale ze, zumu a nga
bo fe nalé. ane ze a nga ya'a a ke jeñ ôbam a jô nye na, ô tame²

¹ In Bulu folk-tales, animals often have an extra letter or two affixed to the regular name or word for that animal; as, for example, *kulu* for *ku* = "tortoise;" *zumu* for *zum*; etc.

² Untranslatable here.

³ The words, "wulu'u avô! wulu'u avô!" when properly intoned and spoken, sound very much like the call of the green forest pigeon or dove.

⁴ *Kôlô si* = "depart" or "leave ground or earth," literally.

⁵ *Tubeya* = past form of the verb *tup*, which literally means "to pierce or bore." When used in the sense of "to run away," it still conveys this idea of forcing a way through the jungle when running to escape.

- 15 wôé ma anon ese wo aye yen. ajô te ôbam w'abi anon ese a so môse te a zu kui môse wu amu zumu a nga kpwe'ele ze a du'u nye.

[Translation.]

(1) It did happen thus, Leopard (he) did wish [to] see Otter because he did wish [to] kill him. | And so he did walk [into the] forest but [did] not go [to] see Otter. Then he did see Pigeon (he) upon | [a] tree (up) and he saw also [the] track [of] Otter there. And so he did ask Pigeon thus, (Who he has) [Whose] track | [is] this? Pigeon [said] thus, [That is the] track [of] Otter (that). Leopard [said] thus, Come [where] I am here. And so Pigeon || (5) (he) did come down. Then Leopard (he) did take [the] thing (they swear palaver) [upon which they take an oath at a palaver] and said, Pigeon (thus), | swear thus when you (shall) see Otter (he) lying down here not try [to] tell him thus, Leopard (he) | comes there, because I shall kill him. And so Leopard (he) did leave. Then Otter (he) did | come and (go) [went to] sleep. And then Pigeon (he) did see Leopard (he) come rather far [away] and told him thus, | Walk quickly! walk quickly! And so Otter (he) did arise and (go) ran and reached || (10) [the] river. Leopard (hear badness) felt bad when he did see Otter (not any) [gone]. [Another] day (another) when | Otter (he) did lie asleep at that place, Pigeon (he) did again see Leopard (he was) coming. And so he did | say [to] Otter thus, Walk quickly! walk quickly! Leopard (he) comes to catch you. When Leopard (he) | did reach [the] tree he did find Otter (he) [had] run away. (Coming) [When he came] (three) [a third time] (Leopard) Pigeon (he) did | do again thus. Then Leopard (he) did become angry and (go) look[ed] for Hawk and said [to] him thus, You || (15) kill (for) me [all the] birds (all) you will see. Because of this Hawk (he) catches [all the] birds (all coming) [beginning with that] day (that) | (coming reaching) [to this] day (this) because Pigeon (he) did torment Leopard and deceived him.

5. HOW THE BEES LOST THEIR FRIENDS.

- 1 A nga bo na, mvô'ôm ba be ayôme biôm bise bi alôan fé ¹ be nga ke tabe élé jia. bise na, jôm e se ngul ² ya kui va amu bia bese bi ne ayok. môs éziñ môt a nga lôt vôm ate. ane a nga yen wôé élé éte. nye nya, me ke bô'ô ³ wôé. ane a nga ke nyoñ nduan ja, ba be bôte befe. ane môt ate a nga bet élé yôp. eyoñ a nga ke kui bebé vôm wôé ô nga to, ane ⁴ biom bise bi alôan bi nga lôpe nye. mvô'ôm fe

¹ Things which live in the forest and which sting.

² *Ngul* signifies literally "strength" or "power."

³ *Bô'ô* = literally "to chop out of a hollow tree," whether honey or edible grubs, etc. The word is *bôk*. It changes to *bô'ô*, when followed by another word, for euphony.

⁴ *Ane* is untranslatable as used here.

é nga zu lôpe nye. ane a nga ku si, te fe ngule ya bô'ô wôé. ve
 mvô'ôm é nga kobô melu mese¹ ve na, ma! ma!² eyoñ biôm bise
 bi alðan bi nga wô'ô ajô te,³ be nga jô na, bi a⁴ ye fe tabe va. wôna
 10 bi nga kôlô. mvô'ôm ve li'i étam. môs mfe môt mfe a nga beta ke
 lôte vôm ate, a yene wôé.⁵ nye fe a nga bulan ja a nyoñ nduan a
 loene bôte befe. nde be nga ke kôban nduan. môte wua a nga bet
 élé yôp vôm wôé ô nga to. ane a nga dub⁶ nduan abôñ. mvô'ôm
 fok é nga zu a ya ve é nji bo nye jam, amu biôm bi alðan bi maneya
 15 kôlô. aso môs ate azukui den, bôt b'abô'ô wôé.

[Translation.]

(1) It did happen thus, Honey-Bees and they [all] small things that sting [into the] forest (they) did | go [to] live [in one] tree (one). All [said] thus, [No] thing (it not) can (to) reach here because we all (we) are | fierce. [One] day (one,) Man (he) did pass [that] place (that). And so he did see [that] honey-tree (that). | He [said] thus, I [will] go chop out [the] honey. And so he did go [to] get fire [from the] village, he [and other] people (other). || (5) Then [that] man (that, he) did climb [up the] tree (up). When he did (go) reach near [the] place [where the] | honey (it did stay) [was], [all the] things (all) which sting (they) did sting him. [The] Bees too | (they) did come [and] sting him. And so he did fall down, [he was] not again able to chop out honey. But | [the] Bees (they) did talk continually thus only, I! I! When [all the] things (all) | which sting (they) did hear [them] saying that, they did say thus, We [shall] not (again) [longer] remain here. Then || (10) they did leave. [The] Bees [were] left alone. [Another] day [another] man (another, he) did again go | pass [that] place (that), and saw [the] honey-tree. He also (he) did return [to the] village and get fire and | called [the] [other] people (other). And so they did go [to] light [a] fire. [One] man (one, he) did climb | [up the] tree (up) [to the] place [where the] honey (it did remain) [was]. Then he (did) put (in) [the] fire [into the] hollow of the tree. [Other] bees | (others, they) did come and became angry; but they [did] not do [to] him [any] thing, because things (they) [that] sting(ing) (they finished || (15) to go) [had gone] away. (Beginning) [From that] day (that) until to-day, people (they) cut out from trees honey.

¹ *Melu mese* = literally "all the nights," but is used only in the sense of "daily," "every day," or "continually."

² "Ma! Ma!" The *m* is, in narrating the tale, drawn out in imitation of the hum of the bees. *Ma* = the personal pronoun "I," used emphatically. It is "me" unless so used. The inference is, of course, that the other insects were offended at the bees, whose humming they interpreted as meaning, "We have driven away the man."

³ *Ajô* = literally "a saying, word, or an affair" ("palaver").

⁴ *A*, spoken with rising inflection, signifies negation.

⁵ *Wôé* is used both for "honey" and a "bee" or "honey-tree."

⁶ *Dup*, the *p* becoming *b*, forming the word *dub*, means literally "to soak in water, soak, or wet:" hence "to soak the hollow of the bee-tree with fire, to kill the bees."